

Weekly Column for March 8, 2007

It would be difficult to have a column today and not talk about the sale of City Hall.

For some background on the subject, this idea was first broached most recently at the State of the City address when I announced that there was a developer showing serious interest in purchasing this land to build a hotel and parking facilities. Since that day, I have had others approach us with additional options for the site.

There was some significant news coverage of this possibility Wednesday and today and thankfully each stated that it was in the early stages of discussion. One thing is certain- there are people interested in this site for economic development purposes. And whether it's jobs or visitors being brought downtown by this future project, it is a good thing.

The building where City Hall currently stands is prime riverfront property. There is a renewed interest in the Hudson River, and if anything, that is one resource we have a great amount of. If someone wants to bring people and dollars into our downtown, and they want to do it where City Hall is, I will embrace them time and again.

I say that without even accounting for the fact that this building is in need of significant repairs to the roof, is an energy wasteland, and one of the least efficient buildings I have ever stepped into.

The "announcement" that developers were interested in Troy was more of a discussion as to the possibilities that could occur here at a Rensselaer County Chamber of Commerce breakfast. I was told just hours after the event that some were accusing me of a political stunt because of the election in November.

That is laughable. Regardless of what happens between now and November in any political race, I assure everyone that there is no way that all of the great economic development occurring here will be delayed because some want to make it a political issue. Things have changed a lot in Troy the past four years. One of the great aspects is the nonsensical political infighting is much reduced from where it used to be. Hopefully it stays that way forever.

As for this new City Hall and where it will be located, that is wide open. I can tell you, we would want any building we move into to be architecturally pleasing, energy efficient, and centrally located near the downtown. And to ease any concerns out there, taxes in Troy will not increase so that we can move City Hall. Not one chance of that happening.

Have a great weekend; this cold snap is nearly out of here. At least that's what the meteorologists are saying.

Harry J Tutunjian  
Mayor of Troy